

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2808

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR LY EG

SUBJECT: LIBYAN PRESS LASHES OUT AT EGYPTIAN CRITICISM
OVER OPEC ATTACK

1. AN EDITORIAL IN THE LIBYAN PRESS DECEMBER 23 LASHED OUT AT EGYPTIAN PRESS INSINUATIONS OF LIBYAN COMPLICITY IN OPEC ATTACK. FBIS HAS CARRIED A LIBYAN SUMMARY OF THE EDITORIAL, WHICH IS A LONG ONE, AND WHICH RAISES ALL OF THE OLD LIBYAN ACCUSATIONS AGAINST EGYPT, STOPPING SHORT ONLY ON ATTACKING PRESIDENT SADAT BY NAME.

2. THE EDITORIAL EXPLAINS LIBYAN SILENCE ON SINAI II BY SAYING THAT "WE HAVE LONG TAKEN PITY ON THEM BY OUR SILENCE," AND BY QUOTING THE PROVERB, "NOTHING BUT COMPASSION FOR THE DEAD." IT DRAGS UP THE OLD CHARGE THAT THE AMIN BROTHERS ("THE EDITORS OF AL-AKHBAR") ARE U.S. SPIES: "IT IS NATURAL THAT WHAT AL-AKHBAR WRITES SHOULD BE DICTATED BY AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE."

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AT THE SAME TIME, THE EDITORIAL REPEATEDLY ASSERTS

THAT AL-AKHBAR IS AN OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE GOE, AND
THAT THE GOE IS THEREFORE RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT IT SAYS.
ALL OF THE OLD LIBYAN GRIEVANCES AGAINST EGYPTIAN
POLICY ARE REHEARSED: WHEN THE ARAB MASSES ARISE,
"IT WILL GO HARD ON THOSE WHO HAVE ALLIED THEMSELVES
WITH THE ENEMIES OF THE GULF, WHO HAVE ACQUIESCED IN
THE SLAUGHTER OF THE ARAB PEOPLE OF OMAN, WHO HAVE
ALLOWED THE ENEMIES OF THE ARAB PEOPLE OF EGYPT TO
REGAIN THEIR POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND PROPAGANDA
POSITIONS, WHO ARE PROUD OF THEIR FRIENDSHIP WITH
AMERICA, THE PRINCIPAL ALLY OF THE ZIONIST ENEMY, WHO
HAVE APPROVED THE STEALING OF PALESTINE, AND WHO HAVE
TURNED ARAB WATERS INTO A PASSAGE FOR THE SHIPS AND
CARGOES OF THE ENEMY." ET CETERA.

3. COMMENT: THE MAIN LINES OF THE EDITORIAL WERE
PROBABLY DICTATED BY QADHAFI, WHO OBVIOUSLY HAS BEEN
STUNG BY AL-AKHBAR'S HINTS OF LIBYAN CONNIVANCE IN THE
OPEC ATTACK, AND WANTS TO SERVE NOTICE THAT HE WILL
GIVE AS GOOD AS HE GETS IF THE PROPAGANDA WAR PICKS UP
AGAIN. IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT, ALTHOUGH THE VIENNA
TERRORISTS ARE DESCRIBED NEUTRALLY AS "THOSE WHO
CARRIED OUT THE ATTACK" AND NOT AS FEDAYEEN, THERE IS
NOT A BREATH OF CRITICISM OF THEM. THIS WOULD BE, ONE
WOULD THINK, THE BEST WAY TO REFUTE CHARGES OF LIBYAN
COMPLICITY IN THE ATTACK, AND THE OMISSION IS DAMNING.
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